

University District Zoning Overlay (UDZO): Phase 1: Commercial

The original University Area Planning Overlay (UAPO) was adopted in 1992 to address development issues unique to the campus area. In 2015, City Council adopted the University District Plan. The Plan includes recommendations on potential updates to the UAPO, including such topics as Floor Area Ratios (FAR), parking requirements and height limits.

The University District Zoning Overlay (UDZO) Phase 1 process will:

- Incorporate plan guidance regarding such issues as height, parking and FAR into the UDZO for commercial properties.
- Incorporate any relevant Urban Commercial Overlay (UCO) provisions into the UDZO and eliminate overlap.
- Maintain the existing UAPO code provisions regarding the residential areas of the University District within the new UDZO.

A future phase will be necessary to address other elements of the UDZO impacted by the plan, such as residential standards and the expansion and composition of the Review Board.

Highlights:

- Two new subarea designations within UDZO
 - Regional Commercial (RC): Higher intensity along High Street (south of Norwich) and Lane Avenue (west of High)
 - Neighborhood Commercial (NC): Moderate intensity along High Street (north of Norwich), Fifth Avenue, Hudson, and smaller nodes of commercial activity within the neighborhood
- Urban Commercial Overlay (UCO) removed: Design standards rolled into design guidance for NC and RC subareas
- Existing UAPO standards for residential areas rolled into new UDZO code
 - Any potential changes based on Plan guidance will be part of a future phase
- Parking standards reduced and simplified
 - 50% reduction for all non-residential uses (restaurant, retail, office, etc.) from standard code
 - Existing UCO gives 25%-50% reduction for non-residential. The new flat 50% reduction replaces this
 - 0.5 spaces per bedroom for residential within the NC and RC subareas
- Allowed Height increased for most properties
 - 72 ft. in the RC subarea
 - 45 ft. in the NC subarea – rear setback of 20 feet for any portion of building above 35 feet (except on High and 5th Ave)
 - Eliminates “step back, step up” exception to height limits
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) recommendation for NC subarea studied
 - Base FAR reduced from Plan recommendation of 1.0 to 0.8
 - Bonus FAR of 0.6 (1.4 total FAR with bonus) if project: Preserves existing contributing structure, or redevelops non-contributing structure or vacant lot
- Benefits of new commercial subareas
 - Implementation of University District Plan recommendations for commercial areas
 - Focuses density along High and Lane adjacent to University, reducing development pressure in other areas
 - Codifies lower intensity development in NC subarea consistent with existing development
 - Reduced commercial parking requirement, recognition of pedestrian and transit oriented neighborhood
 - Residential parking requirement tied to bedrooms rather than units, encouraging more diverse unit mixes
 - Increased height limits at frontage, elimination of “step back, step up” exception
- Community Review
 - Public review to date has included two mailings to over 1,200 property owners, a public open house, online survey, multiple meetings with stakeholders, and briefings to the University Area Commission leadership and committees. A summary of input received to date is available at the project webpage.
 - Planning Division will ask the University Area Review Board and University Area Commission to consider support for the draft code at their December meetings. Provided a positive recommendation from those bodies, the draft code will be brought to the Development Commission on February 22, 2017.
 - Project webpage: <https://www.columbus.gov/planning/udzo/>
 - Contact: Christopher Lohr, Senior Planner, crlohr@columbus.gov